

Moving Mountains

“Moving a mountain” is a metaphor for an impossibly hard task or purpose

What important things in our lives are as hard to do as moving a mountain?

What do you do about mountains that you want moved?



When God Works

Acts 10:1-8

Chinese: page 1782

Spanish: page 1399

Brown: page 1101

Green: page 751



Cultural Setting: Gentiles and Rome were distant from Jews

Jewish people wanted to be distinct from nations (Gentiles)

- Religion: God’s command to be distinct
 - Worship the one true God alone, not their idols
 - Signs of distinction from other peoples:
Circumcision, keep the Sabbath day, eat only “**clean**” foods
- Jewish people added “fences”
 - Additional rules to be even more careful about staying distinct from other nations
 - Especially: **no hospitality** (eating with, entering homes) with Gentiles

Cultural Setting: Gentiles and Rome were distant from Jews

Jewish people wanted to be distinct from nations (Gentiles)

Jewish people didn’t like or trust Romans

- Government: seen as the oppressors over the Jewish people
- Expected God to send a Messiah to overthrow Rome
- Romans killed Jesus (at request of Jewish leaders)
- Romans sometimes persecuted Christians

God's work with nations and peoples

Jews

Jesus' focus
Apostles &
first Christians

Samaritans

Half-Jewish
Added to
the church

Gentiles=the nations

Eventually included
in the church
It wasn't easy!



Final Vision of Christianity:

Every nation, people, tribe, and language
with one voice, praising God in Christ together

Acts 10:1-11:18

Cornelius in Caesarea
Gentile, Roman army officer
Worshipped God of Israel

Angel: "Send for Simon Peter"

Simon Peter in Joppa
Jewish Christian
Leader of Christian church

Angel: "Go to Cornelius"

Peter preached the Gospel

Holy Spirit came on Cornelius and his household

Peter accepted them & baptized them

Jewish Christians were hesitant, then they accepted Cornelius

• **A dramatic transformation of Christian church!**

This story is told 3 times → very important for Luke!

Acts 10:1-8

1-2: Cornelius: Foreign army officer who “fears” (worships) God in prayer and action

3-4: • Challenges: Gentile, Roman, army officer

5-6: • Caesarea: Important in Roman government
• Generosity seems to be toward the Jewish people

7-8: • “He is respected by all the Jewish people” 10:22

• Devout and worshiped the God of Israel

• Expressed in prayer, right living,
and generosity to the Jews

• Together with all his household

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Acts 10:1-8

1-2: Cornelius: Foreign army officer who “fears” (worships) God in prayer and action

3-4: God is pleased by His prayer and actions of worship

5-6: • While praying, an angel appears and speaks

• He couldn't offer sacrifices, so he did what he could

7-8: • God accepted His worship as a ‘memorial offering’

• A powerful message to an ‘outsider’!

“The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God’s people.”

Revelation 5:8

Acts 10:1-8

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• A powerful message to an ‘outsider’!

• **His prayers and worship are offered by angels before the presence of God!**

• God chooses Cornelius for a critical task

Acts 10:1-8

- 1-2: Cornelius: Foreign army officer who “fears” (worships) God in prayer and action
- 3-4: God is pleased by His prayer and action of worship
- 5-6: God’s plan: send for Simon Peter to come and speak God’s word
- 7-8: • Cornelius is to ask a Jewish Christian for help
- Learn the Gospel
 - The usual pattern of God: bringing God’s message through people
 - Little explanation: Simon will tell you

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- 3-4: God is pleased by His prayer and action of worship
- 5-6: God’s plan: send for Simon Peter to come and speak God’s word
- 7-8: Cornelius obeys
- Cornelius waits for God’s work through Simon
 - 4 days!

The Big Idea

in every nation, people, and language
 God rewards people who seek Him
 ^ **in prayer and action**
 by giving His grace and goodness
 in the Gospel

**God is directly at work in the lives of people around the world
 and I got to experience some of it!**

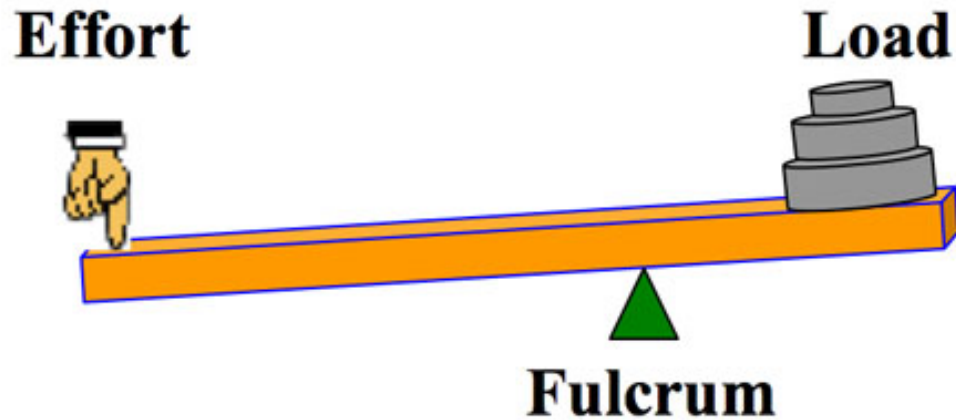
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**We have the privilege to minister WITH people of many nations
 rather than merely ministering TO them**

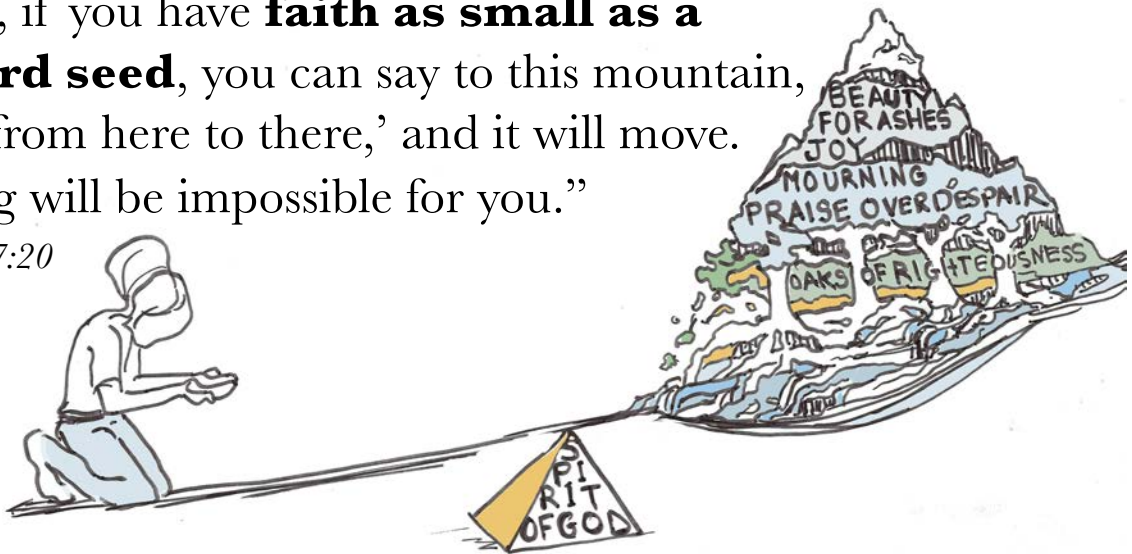
Mechanical advantage with a lever

- When you have a longer lever, you multiply the power of your effort



Jesus' disciples wondered why they had so little power. Jesus replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have **faith as small as a mustard seed**, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

Matthew 17:20



Application

- **Follow Cornelius's example**
 - Pray “continually”: regularly, seeking God
 - Worship through actions
 - Live righteously: holy, God-like
 - Live generously, especially for those with needs
 - Expect God's reward of finding and experiencing His grace
 - Moving mountains for His Kingdom!
- **Look for faith & devotion among all peoples**
 - Especially where we don't expect to find it
 - Follow great examples, and join with them when we can
 - Rejoice with those who rejoice,
and weep with those who weep

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What is the mountain you need moved?

- **Worship God in prayer and action**
- **Trust God to do the impossible according to His wisdom**